Data Sources

Population and migration data: Population and migration data in this issue are from two different data sources. Estimates of population change, net migration, and natural increase reported in the first article are from the Bureau of the Census county population estimates issued annually. These estimates are based on the 1990 Census with changes in subsequent years based on components of change in births, deaths, and migration. Migration estimates are derived as a residual by subtracting natural population increase from actual increases. Estimates include net gain from other counties as well as the institutional population.

Migration data reported in the second article are from the Internal Revenue Service. The Internal Revenue Service compiles annual, county-level data by matching current year tax returns with those from the previous year and comparing addresses. If a county or residence is different in the previous year, members of that family are considered migrants. If the county is the same or no matching return is found, they are considered nonmigrants. The number of exemptions claimed on the return serves as a proxy for the number of migrants in that family. Most people file their returns during early to mid-April, so the data here refer to flows from April of 1 year to April the next. The article in this issue describes migration changes using two sets of flows, 1988-89 and 1993-94.

Employment data: Data on nonmetro employment and unemployment reported in this issue come from Bureau of Labor Statistics county-level employment data files. These data are taken from unemployment insurance claims and State surveys of established payrolls which are then benchmarked to State totals from the CPS. The BLS data series provides monthly estimates of labor force, employment, and unemployment for individual counties.

Income, poverty, and transfer payment data: The household income and poverty data reported in this issue were calculated from the March CPS. Every year, the March CPS includes supplemental questions on sources and amounts of money received during the previous calendar year and poverty status. Information on family size and income is used to estimate the number of families and individuals in poverty based on official guidelines issued by the Office of Management and Budget. Demographic data are available to examine the distribution of income and the characteristics of the poverty populations in metro and nonmetro areas.

Information on personal income and transfer payments derives from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) employment and income data. BEA estimates annual earnings, proprietor's income, transfer payments, and other personal income at the county level based primarily on administrative records. Annual estimates of transfer payments reported in this issue are based on administrative data from the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor, the Office of Personnel Management, the Bureau of the Census, the USDA, and the IRS. Note that BEA's estimates of personal income include in-kind sources, such as Medicare, and food stamp benefits. The CPS collects data only on money income, so the two sources provide different income estimates. A shortcoming of BEA data is the 2-year lag between when they are collected and when they are available for analysis.

Farm household income data: Farm household income data are from the Farms Costs and Returns Survey (FCRS). The FCRS is a probability-based survey in which each respondent represents a number of farms of similar size and type. Thus, sample data can be expanded using appropriate weights to represent all farms in the contiguous United States. The FCRS is conducted annually by the Economic Research Service and the National Agricultural Statistics Service in all States except Alaska and Hawaii. For the 1994 calendar year, usable data were collected from more than 7,000 farms and ranches.

Estimates based on an expanded sample differ from what would have occurred if a complete enumeration had been taken. However, the relative standard error (RSE), a measure of sampling variability, is available from survey results. The RSE is the standard error of the estimate expressed as a percentage of the estimate. According to the guidelines for use of the FCRS, any estimate with an RSE greater than 25 percent must be identified. Fortunately, none of the FCRS data reported in this issue have RSE's that high.

The standard error of the estimate can also be used to evaluate the statistical differences between groups. The article on operator household income emphasizes differences between groups only when estimates were significantly different at the 95-percent level.

Farm labor data: Information on the characteristics and earnings of hired farmworkers are from the CPS earnings microdata file. Each month, the CPS collects labor force information based on respondents' activity during 1 week during the month. In addition, workers in about a quarter of the CPS households are asked questions on usual weekly hours worked and earnings. The CPS earnings microdata file consists of all records from the monthly quarter-samples of CPS households that were subject to having these questions on hours worked and earnings asked during the year. The 1994 data file contained information on almost 500,000 persons. Data on hired and contract labor expenditures are from the 1987 and 1992 Censuses of Agriculture. The Census of Agriculture, conducted every 5 years by the Bureau of Census, is the leading source of statistics about the Nation's agricultural production, including farm labor use. The census is a mail survey of the Nation's farms. To reduce respondent burden, some questions, such as labor expenditures, were asked of a sample of farms.

Definitions

The data reported in this issue of *Rural Conditions and Trends* are for nonmetropolitan (nonmetro) and metropolitan (metro) areas, but we use the terms "rural" and "urban" interchangeably with "nonmetro" and "metro," the original and more accurate terms used in the data sources.

Family: Family is defined as two or more people residing together who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Farm: Any place from which $1,000 or more worth of agricultural products are sold or normally would be sold in a year.

Farm household income: The total income of farm operator households includes income from both farm and off-farm sources. Farm income to the household includes net cash farm income less depreciation, adjusted for the share received by the primary operator household in the case of multiple-household farms. Farm household income also includes the income that all farm household members received from all other sources. The definition of farm operator household income is consistent with the definition of household income used by the Bureau of the Census in the Current Population Survey.

Farm operator households: The households of primary operators of farms organized as individual operators, partnerships, and family corporations. Farm operator households exclude households associated with farms organized as nonfamily corporations or cooperatives, as well as households where the operator is a hired manager. Household members include all persons dependent on the household for financial support, whether they live in the household or not. Students away at school, for example, are counted as household members if they are dependents.

Hired farmworkers: Persons aged 15 and older who did farm work for cash wages or salary, including persons who manage farms for employers on a paid basis, supervisors of farmworkers, and general farm and nursery workers.

Household: Households consist of all persons living in a housing unit. A house, an apartment, or a single room is considered a housing unit if it is occupied as separate living quarters. To be classified as separate living quarters, the occupants of the housing unit must not live and eat with any other people in the structure.

Household income: The sum of the amounts of money received from wages and salaries, nonfarm self-employment income; farm self-employment income; Social Security or railroad retirement; Supplement Security Income; cash public assistance or welfare payments; dividends, interest, or net rental income; veterans payments; unemployment or workers' compensation; private or government employee pensions; alimony or child support and other periodic payments for all household members.

Inflation rate: The percentage change in a measure of the average price level. The two measures of the average price level used in this issue are the Consumer Price Index and the implicit Personal Consumption Expenditures Deflator (earnings, income, poverty, and transfer payments articles).

Major farming regions:

Northeast—Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont.

Lake States—Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin.

Corn Belt—Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio.

Northern Plains—Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota.

Appalachian—Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia.

Southeast—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina.

Delta—Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi.

Southern Plains—Oklahoma, Texas.

Mountain—Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming.

Pacific—California, Oregon, Washington.

Metro areas: Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA's), as defined by the Office of Management and Budget, include core counties containing a city of 50,000 or more people or have an urbanized area of 50,000 or more and total area population of at least 100,000. Additional contiguous counties are included in the MSA if they are economically integrated with the core county or counties. For most data sources, these designations are based on population and commuting data from the 1990 Census of Population. The Current Population Survey data through 1993 categorizes counties as metro and nonmetro based on population and commuting data from the 1980 Census. Throughout this publication, "urban" and "metro" have been used interchangeably to refer to people and places within MSA's.

Minority counties: Refers to three categories of minority counties—Black, Hispanic, and Native American—defined as having 20 percent or more of county population made up of the minority group according to 1990 census data.

Nonfarm earnings: The sum of wage and salary income, other labor income, such as privately administered pension and profit-sharing plans, and current production income of nonfarm sole proprietorships, partnerships, and tax-exempt cooperatives.

Nonmetro areas: Counties outside metro area boundaries. Throughout this publication, rural and nonmetro are used interchangeably to refer to people and places outside of MSA's.

Personal income: Personal income is the estimated total income (cash and goods) received by, or on behalf of, all residents of an area from all sources: salaries and wages, other labor income (such as employer contributions to private pension/profit-sharing plans, and private group health and life insurance plans), net income from the operation of a business (proprietors' income), dividends, interest, net rent, and transfers payments to individuals and nonprofit institutions by government and business less contributions to social insurance programs like Social Security, State and Federal retirement plans. The term total personal income emphasizes that earned income (wages, salary, proprietors income) has been combined with unearned income (dividends, interest and rent and transfer payments).

Population growth types: Modest growth is below the national average of 5.6 percent during 1990-95; rapid growth is above it.

Poverty: A person is in poverty if his or her family's money income is below the official poverty threshold appropriate for that size and type of family. Different thresholds exist for elderly and nonelderly unrelated individuals, for two-person families with and without elderly heads, and for different family sizes by number of children. For example, the poverty threshold for a family of four with two children was $15,029 in 1994. The thresholds are adjusted for inflation annually using the Consumer Price Index.

Region: Most articles in this issue use the modified regional delineation introduced in the Spring 1995 issue to help understand 1990-94 changes in rural areas. The States in each region are as follows:

North—Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

Central—Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota.

South—Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

West—Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Rural-urban continuum codes: Classification system developed by ERS to group counties by the size of their urban population and their adjacency to larger areas. (See Margaret A. Butler and Calvin L. Beale, *Rural-Urban Continuum Codes for Metro and Nonmetro Counties, 1993*, AGES 9425, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Sept. 1994).

Metro counties—

Central counties of metro areas of 1 million population or more

Fringe counties of metro areas of 1 million population or more

Counties in metro areas of 250,000 to 1 million population

Counties in metro areas of fewer than 250,000 population

Nonmetro counties—

Urban population of 20,000 or more, adjacent to a metro area

Urban population of 20,000 or more, not adjacent to a metro area

Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, adjacent to a metro area

Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, not adjacent to a metro area

Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, adjacent to a metro area

Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, not adjacent to a metro area

Nonmetro adjacent counties—

Nonmetro counties physically adjacent to one or more metro areas and having at least 2 percent of the employment labor force in the county commuting to the central metro county

Transfer payments: Cash or goods that people and nonprofit institutions receive from government and some businesses (for example, liability payments) for which no work is currently performed. Receipt of transfer payments, however, may reflect work performed in the past. For example, elderly people receive Social Security now because they worked earlier in their lives and paid taxes to fund the program. In this issue, government transfers to individuals are grouped into six broad categories.

Retirement and disability programs—Social Security, railroad retirement, military retirement, Federal civilian, State and local government employee retirement; workers' compensation, State temporary disability programs; and black lung.

Medical programs—Medicare, Medicaid, and CHAMPUS (Civilian Health and Medical Plan of the Uniformed Services).

Income maintenance programs—Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), food stamps, general assistance, emergency assistance, refugee assistance, foster home care, earned income tax credits, and energy assistance.

Unemployment insurance—State unemployment compensation, unemployment compensation to Federal civilian employees, railroad employees and veterans; trade adjustment allowances; and other smaller unemployment programs.

Veterans' programs—Various programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Includes veterans' pensions, disability compensation, and other smaller programs.

Education, training, and other programs—Federal education and training assistance includes Federal fellowship payments (National Science Foundation fellowships and traineeships, subsistence payments to State maritime academy cadets, and other Federal fellowships), interest subsidy on higher education loans, basic educational opportunity grants, and Job Corps payments. Other programs include Bureau of Indian Affairs payments, education exchange payments, Alaska Permanent Fund dividend payments, compensation of survivors of public safety officers, compensation of victims of crime, Hurricane Hugo, and the Loma Prieta earthquake, compensation for Japanese internment, and other special government payments to individuals.

Note that payments from farm commodity programs are received as part of farmers' gross cash income from current farming activities. They are not transfer payments.

Typology Codes: Classification system developed and periodically revised by ERS to group counties by economic and policy-relevant characteristics. The typology codes used in this issue are those described in Peggy J. Cook and Karen L. Mizer, *The Revised ERS County Typology: An Overview*, RDRR 89, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Dec. 1994.

Economic types (mutually exclusive, a county may fall into only one economic type):

Farming dependent—Farming contributed a weighted annual average of 20 percent or more of total labor and proprietors' income over the 3 years from 1987 to 1989.

Mining dependent—Mining contributed a weighted annual average of 15 percent or more of total labor and proprietors' income over the 3 years from 1987 to 1989.

Manufacturing dependent—Manufacturing contributed a weighted annual average of 30 percent or more of total labor and proprietors' income over the 3 years from 1987 to 1989.

Government dependent—Federal, State, and local government activities contributed a weighted annual average of 25 percent or more of total labor and proprietors' income over the 3 years from 1987 to 1989.

Services dependent—Service activities (private and personal services, agricultural services, wholesale and retail trade, finance, insurance, real estate, transportation, and public utilities) contributed a weighted annual average of 50 percent or more of total labor and proprietor income over the 3 years from 1987 to 1989.

Nonspecialized—Counties not classified as a specialized economic type over the 3 years from 1987 to 1989.

Policy types (overlapping, a county may fall into any number of these types and one economic type):

Retirement-destination—The population aged 60 years and over in 1990 increased by 15 percent or more during 1980-90 through inmovement of people.

Federal lands—Federally owned lands made up 30 percent or more of a county's land area in the year 1987.

Commuting—Workers aged 16 years and over commuting to jobs outside their county of residence were 40 percent or more of all the county's workers in 1990.

Persistent-poverty—Persons with poverty-level income in the preceding year were 20 percent or more of total population in each of 4 years: 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990.

Transfers-dependent—Income from transfer payments contributed a weighted annual average of 25 percent or more of total personal income over the 3 years from 1987 to 1989. Note: The article dealing with transfer payments uses a different classification of transfer dependency whereby all nonmetro counties are ranked into quartiles according to the 3-year weighted average of personal income from transfer payments. Counties in the bottom quartile (low group) received less than 19 percent of personal income from transfer payments; those in the middle two quartiles (medium group) received from 19 to 27 percent of personal income from transfer payments; and those in the top quartile (high group) received 27 percent and over of personal income from transfer payments.

Unemployment rate: The number of unemployed people 16 years and older as a percentage of the civilian labor force age 16 years and older.